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ABSTRACT

This review of the literature discusses contemporary theories and models of action research that are being used by university faculty who are working with administrators and teachers to plan and conduct school-and classroom-based action research projects. The books that are reviewed provide educators with a variety of models for planning and implementing an action research project. Many of the authors work in the critical emancipatory tradition. Emancipatory action researchers seek to identify inequities that are embedded in social institutions, interactions, and ideologies, and to develop a moral epistemology based on ethical caring and social justice. Other action researchers work in the teacher researcher tradition. They view teachers as active producers of knowledge that is aimed at improving practice through a better understanding of the multiple layers of meaning and the fullness of actions in classrooms and schools. Educators sometimes engage in institutional action research or participatory evaluation organized around school reform. Evaluators who do self-study inquire into their own lives and construct living theories as they meditate on their own experiences. Action research provides the conceptual basis and the methods needed to deliberate on social, cultural, and historical practices, to critique existing and emerging educational theories and practices, and to study actions in social institutions and schools. Action researchers do not always disseminate the results of their inquiries in reports, essays, or action plans. They may express themselves in varied forms to capture the human condition through poetry, myths, song, or dance. Action research is an international movement that involves citizens in participating in discussions about the conditions that facilitate or inhibit the development of deliberative forms of democracy within classrooms, schools, and society. (Contains 1 table and 27 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Action Research: The School University Connection

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Abstract

"Wisdom lies neither in the fixity nor the change, but in the dialectic between the two." Octavo Paz (Mexican Poet, Times (London, 8 June, 1989).

This review of the literature discusses contemporary theories and models of action research that are being used by university faculty who are working with administrators and teachers to plan and conduct school and classroom based action research projects. The books that are reviewed provide educators with a variety models for planning and implementing an action research project.

Many of the authors work in the critical emancipatory tradition. For those seeking liberation from a status quo that no longer serves society well, informed skepticism, informed empathy, nonrepression, and nondiscrimination become the basis for deliberation. Emancipatory action researchers seek to identify inequities that are embedded in social institutions, interactions and ideologies, and to develop a moral epistemology based on ethical caring and social justice. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kompf, et al., 1996; McTaggart, 1993, 1997; Noffke, 1997; O'Hanlon, 1996)

Those action researchers who work in the teacher researcher tradition view teachers as active producers of knowledge that is aimed at improving practice. Practitioner or teacher researchers give voice to their concerns in the form of oral inquiry, journals, and reflective writing. As they strive for a better understanding of the multiple layers of meaning and the fullness of their actions and impressions in classrooms and schools, teacher researchers are developing professionally and acting personally and politically to improve life classrooms and conditions in schools. (Altrichter, Posch, Somekh, 1993; Calhoun, 1994; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Oja and Smulyan, 1989; Sagor, 1992)

Educators sometimes engage in institutional action research or participatory evaluation. Administrators, teachers, and students organize around a school reform project. Sometimes the reforms are externally mandated. Curiously enough, these studies, which often begin as "need to know and need to show" projects, often result in "desire to learn" collaborations. (Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin, 1994; Cousins and Earl, 1995; Hustler, Cassidy, Cuff, 1986)

Those who do self-study inquire into their own lives and construct "living theories". Surrounded by contradictions, they withdraw from the turmoil from time to time, and they turn to philosophical reflection to view the customs and events of their time as elements of the conception of their own self. They are themselves the substance of their study. Believing that every human being carries in herself or himself the complete pattern of human nature, their philosophical essays often illustrate a wide-awake, critical consciousness, intellectual depth, and a capacity to read ahead of the culture-in-action text, capturing it with the imagery of a poet, the eye of an artist, the soul of a healer, and the flexibility of a jazz musician Whitehead, 1998).

Action research provides the conceptual basis and the variety of methods needed to deliberate on social, cultural, and historical practices, to critique existing and emerging educational theories and practices, and to interrogate actions in social institutions and schools. Educational researchers strive to create conditions under which practitioners can view their work and world more fully, more deliberately, more democratically. In the process of collective inquiry, we construct professional, personal, and political knowledge and develop greater reflective consciousness. The products have variety, too. Action researchers don't always disseminate the results of inquiries in essays, reports, or action plans. They often express them in forms that capture the human condition in all of its dignity, humility and diversity--in the arts--poetry, myths, song, and dance.

Action research is an international movement which involves all citizens in participating in discussions about the conditions which facilitate and or inhibit the development of deliberative forms of democracy within classrooms, schools, and society.

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Introduction

> Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of those practices, and (c) the situations in which these practices are carried out. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986)

When I first started working with teachers, I had no particular label for the work that we did together. I merely joined them when they were deliberating on some aspect of their practice, and as they struggled to change it, I struggled to document the sense that I was making of their sense making. I was a newly appointed assistant professor, a supervisor of student teachers, and a member of the site-based management team at the school, and I was invited to do an ethnography there. This was an urban school in transition. They were determined to improve the student achievement, and they wanted as much documentation of their efforts as possible. I started collecting documents, attending functions, talking with faculty, parents, and students, and collecting stories. And I started writing an institutional story for the school. After a while, they asked me to facilitate a series of staff development workshops on literacy contexts and practices at the school. They directed me, I taught them, and they taught me. At first, I collected data and did the documentation, and later they joined me in the documentation process. We compared interpretations. Having been a teacher for seventeen years, I knew of no other way to work.

Now I realize that what we were doing in those early years is called participatory action research. In this paper, I define educational action research, discuss the theoretical foundation for educational action research, and present examples of how university researchers and teachers are conducting action research in classrooms and schools. Although I reviewed nearly eighty books, I am only discussing a representative sampling in this paper. I selected these books because they provide university researchers and practitioners with guidelines and strategies for conducting research. I selected diverse models of action research and participatory action research/evaluation in classrooms and schools that were developed Australia, Canada, England and the United States. Taken together the models demonstrate the connectedness and the concerns of the action research community.

Educational Action Research: What is it?

Educational action research is based on the notion that systematic, conscious, reflective inquiry ought to be a part of the everyday life of a professional. In everyday life professionals engage in cycles of action, observation, dialogue, and reflection. Then they

make decisions about next steps they'll take in improving their practice or their situation. Much everyday reflection -in-action in the classroom is tacit. It is taken for granted and occurs without any real intellectual preparation. It is routinized behavior, based on an unselfconscious and unarticulated understanding of how things are suppose to be. The mindsets for acting in particular situations enable teachers to act quickly and unconsciously. Yet every action is packed with meaning and an entire history resides in the thoughts of the practitioner. For the most part, teachers only stop to think about practice when something goes wrong. When something disrupts the flow of action, the educator stops and thinks about it, and, in the process, becomes a researcher of the practice context (Schon, 1987). After a critical event, the educator may deliberate on the case in the car on the way home or with colleagues over lunch. The inquiry is not limited to verbal deliberation. The educator may draw, create a diagram or map, reenact the scene, re-search his or her memory for possible explanations. That reflection on action helps him or her to understand and improve action or to explain an action to others. After engaging in practical reasoning, the professional is better able to make decisions. Schon observes that when teachers either and/or write down the theories that guide their actions, they become capable of developing a reflective awareness concerning the basis for their action. The reflections become cases from which they construct practical theories.

What distinguishes that form of practical inquiry and reflection from action research? Action research involves focusing on a single problem, while changing the social system. The aim is to discover and to consciously change patterns of thinking and acting that are well established, but may no longer be particularly desirable or efficacious. Action research depends on the participation by clients in diagnosing, fact-finding, and their free choice to engage in new actions. Educational action research is not a new concept. Those action researchers with a sense of history will realize that our conceptualization of action research has always been linked with notions of democracy, and that our approaches to it have evolved with our evolving conceptualization of democracy. Dewey (1910) suggested that teachers ought to engage in reflective with their students in an effort to operationalize democratic processes, like deliberation, in the classroom. He believed that by engaging in systematic cycles of experimentation, dialogue and reflection, teachers and learners would form a community distinguished by its commitment to informed empathy and informed skepticism. Further, he believed that the science of education would be created and that professionalization of teaching would occur as teachers researched their practice. Through practical inquiry and action research, teacher educators and teachers are striving to create a research process that is well-suited for practice (Schon, 1983, 1987; Carr and Kemmis,

1986; McTaggart, 1992, 1997; Noffke, 1997). In the following section of the paper, I discuss the conceptual grounding of their work.

Becoming Critically Reflective Professionals: The Theory

Two authors stand out as providing the conceptual basis for the contemporary educational action research movement, which fuses the horizon between researchers and practitioners from the kindergarten through the university-level. Donald Schon's books (1983, 1987), The Reflective Practitioner and Towards a New Design for Education of the Reflective Practitioner: Teaching and Learning in the Professions: Preparing Professionals for the Demands of Practice, and Carr and Kemmis' Becoming Critical.

The Reflective Practitioner, Donald Schon

In The Reflective Practitioner, Donald Schon (1983) became interested in how professionals came to know what they knew, and he looked at how they searched for answers. He focused on both "practical competence and professional artistry" (p. vii-viii). The following discussion is a summary of Schon's findings.

In professions like medicine, practitioners strive to become autonomous managers of their own careers. The experienced professional possesses formal knowledge, methods, and skills, but they draw on knowledge based on their experience with similar case when confronted with a new case. They consider the unique aspect of the new case, and they revise their thinking and decision-making framework as they go along. In other words, Schon notes, they search for answers that are anchored in their practical experience.

Since teaching is an active, social process, Schon hypothesized, knowledge of teaching must evolve as teachers engage in the act of problem-solving specific cases. Rather than select from a content of scientific knowledge of teaching to a body of lore about "what works," Schon observed experienced professionals using convergent knowledge bases and tailoring them to specific situational and client needs. Their goal is to transform situations for the better. Drawing on insights from cognitive theory, he suggests that teachers, like the other practitioners he studied, must draw on prior knowledge, memories, and scripts and engage in practical reasoning when they are confronted with problems during teaching events.

What is the criteria that Schon's professionals use to judge the effectiveness of their ideas, policies and proposals? Schon notes that professionals judge the effectiveness of ideas, policies and proposals by their usefulness and practicality. Practitioners learn by doing. In the course of action, they try out a strategy and observe what happens. If they perceive a problem, they may ask the students to explain what they are learning. As they attend to responses, probing for more information, they try to figure out the flaw in the thinking led to a particular problem.

Schon differentiates the practitioners' knowledge from the theoretical knowledge generated by the researcher working in the technical-rational tradition. Technical rationalists used scientific method and technology to develop educational theories based on the most methodological and best-documented thinking available at the time. Over time, the results of their scientific studies were synthesized into theories. Those theories were codified as knowledge and implicated as principles for practice. By the 1960s, the limits of that model were recognized. The theorists were not the practitioners, and the theories were, at best, partial representations of knowledge, but they weren't situated in practice. Practice involves values and values conflicts--conflicts of goals, purposes, and interests, and teachers are forever torn between professional concerns, consumer demands, client well-being, and institutional demands (Schon, 1983, p. 17). Teaching is a practical and moral activity. The practitioner does not set up a controlled experiment, but they do explore problems in a rigorous manner. They act, reflect, observe, intervene, observe, and revise their practice in a case-by-case manner. They problem-solve and decide. But how?

In Schon's view, practitioners reflect-in-action and reflect-on-practice, then generate their own theories. As they go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of actions of everyday life, they experience the same situation over and over again. They confront the entire situation in all of its complexity. Most of their reflection occurs in the middle of the problem situation. He calls this reflection-in-action. Over time, they reflect on their theories of practice, and they revise them. They consider their tacit norms, analyze their judgments, and reframe the problem. They give reasons for their behavior, and they develop and understanding of the implications of their behavior. Schon notes that when this happens they become 'researchers of the practice context'. "They don't consult external theories and techniques, rather they construct a local theory for each unique case. They don't reflect on means and ends separately from the practice context because means and ends are integrally connected to the way they frame the problem situation" (p. 68). Thinking, doing, and decision-making are part of the action. Schon maintains that reflection-on-action can proceed in situations of uncertainty and novelty because it is not bound to a pre-specified protocol or pre-specified principles of practice.

According to Schon, there are limits to reflection-in-action though (p. 204-5). One person cannot know everything or understand everything. That is why practitioners share their thinking about cases with colleagues, supervisors, and even their students. Colleagues can be helpful listeners, demonstrators, observers, and critical friends. They provide different perspectives, create an awareness of alternate values and choices, and create conditions for growth and change (231). When practitioners reflect on practice together, they tell stories and they discover tacit theories, the unexpected themes, and the implicit

patterns that are their implicit theories. They discover their own capacity to think and solve problems, to reflect on the meaning of situations, and to consider the goals of their actions. They see patterns across cases and across contexts.

Schon found that as the practitioner meets dead ends in their problem-solving and they are forced to restructure the problem. They are forced to take into consideration the unique aspects of the situation, to note similarities and differences with previous cases, to consider various courses of action. They use the criteria they have already established to generate new possible actions. Learning to improve teaching is a self-learning process, not a training experience, Schon concludes. "The paradox of learning a really new competence is this, that a person cannot at first understand what he needs to learn, can only learn it by educating himself, only by doing what he does not understand (Schon, 1983: 93)."

He maintained that significant learning and significant change can occur when practitioners can extend their reflective conversations to include their students' perspectives. They try to understand a problem-situation from the perspective of the learner by "giving them reason." They listen to the learners' explanations and try to understand their thinking. Then they experiment to produce clarification.

From these types of reflective activities, practitioners generate a set of principles and procedures that are specific to the problem-situation, rather than a set of generalizable principles and procedures. According to Schon, it is during reflective conversations that practitioners discover the "wisdom of practice" (p. 395).

Towards a New Design for Education of the Reflective Practitioner: Donald Schon

In 1987, Schon further articulated his theory of reflective practice in his book, Towards a New Design for Education of the Reflective Practitioner: Teaching and Learning in the professions: Preparing Professionals for the Demands of Practice. He discussed the processes by which coaches can assist teachers in becoming reflective practitioners. He notes that good coaching depends on tapping into the goal-setting, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and learning process that the practitioner is using and extending it. How do coaches help practitioners learn in practice?

The effective coach asks the practitioner to reflect on questions like these:

What is this I am doing?

How have I been thinking about this?

What alternatives do I have?

How do I feel about this?

How does what I am doing relate to larger issues?

Schon notes that when coaches and practitioners talk, the conversation is a collective verbal improvisation. Conventional routines are revealed through discussions, in anecdotes, side comments, and reactions, and without conscious deliberation, and hidden or implicit scripts are revealed. Schon observed that when practitioners get to talking about their work, they generally talk about instrumental problems, and they share the theories and techniques that they are currently using in their practice, and they consult the knowledge bases, the rules, and procedures that they have learned. However, Schon noted, most of the problem-solving and theorizing that practitioners do is constructed through practice.

During practicum or supervision experiences, practitioners and coaches participate in reflective conversations. During these conversations, practitioners try out ideas and design their practice. However, conversation can be problematic. The coach can tell, criticize, describe, demonstrate, and provide instructions. Or the coach can listen while the practitioner reflects upon a performance--questioning, describing, comparing, identifying successes, describing rules and operations. Both approaches may be used to support practitioners in designing or improving their practice. But Schon believes it is only after time and an extended process of demonstrating, observing, reflecting, and criticizing, imitating, and initiating, that practitioners begin to be reflective in ways that professionals are reflective.

Schon believes that coaches should help practitioners, whether novice or more experienced, become more reflective. He describes three levels of reflection that he observed in the reflective practitioners that he studied:

- the first level involves description of an event,
- the second level involves reflection on the meaning of the event, and
- the third level involves dialogue on the dialogue--the language in the description, the explanatory framework.

Schon maintains that a coach must be patient, noting that "it is the ability to hold loosely and in ways that give the practitioner the ability to compare and coordinate meanings, to learn from reflection, to examine the problematic, to examine tacit theories, to test out understandings and communicate insights, and to reflect on espoused theories and compare them with theories in use" (p. 155).

Some guidelines that he proposes for coaches include these:

1. Give reason, explain why something is or is not working.
2. Design holistically, then refine.
3. Recognize and appreciate both desirable and undesirable qualities,
4. Describe and recognize skillful design and promote discussion of it.

5. Use reflective conversation in creative ways, to discuss substantive problems, affective dimensions, and to build relationships (p. 156).

Becoming Practical: Carr and Kemmis

Carr and Kemmis (1986) examine the growing movement and professionalization of teachers. They, too, want to prepare reflective practitioners; however, theirs is an historical perspective that provides the reader with a reflective, historical consciousness of the social conditions, political pressures, and personal aspirations that have shaped the traditions in educational research and have led to a pragmatic approach to schooling. Carr and Kemmis aspire to expose and critically assess educational research and curriculum and to provide practitioners, teacher researchers, teacher educators, and educational researchers with a new language and a new logic for curriculum theorizing. They believe that teachers need to defend their own claims of professional expertise. In their mind, each teacher must adopt a researcher stance towards their practice. However, the researcher stance is one that is informed by historical understanding of the intellectual and social traditions that shape questions, as well as knowledge about practice. Whereas Schon's conceptualization of reflective practice is practical. Carr and Kemmis' conceptualization is critical and emancipatory.

Professionals who work in the critical, emancipatory tradition generate a critical discourse of the profession. They reflect on dominant and alternative views of educational research in relation to practice and the different images of professional. They try to develop an educational theory in which research and practice emerge from one another. They view the professional educator from the stance of the critical community. In a critical community, teachers are informed about the broad practice of education, the theory and practice, the intellectual traditions that inform it (positivist, interpretivist), the development of the science of education, and themes that emerge from philosophy of education. They are also informed about the basis of their own assumptions, value interests, and beliefs. They use critical theory as a point of departure for examining the approaches to teacher professionalism, educational reform, and their own educative action.

Carr and Kemmis' concern is that educational research has historically has been taken out of practice. For example, educational psychologists studied self-esteem or motivation, or they did studies in which they observed one aspect of practice, such as wait time, then they constructed a theory of practice. They put all of those theories together, and they established a body of theory, which they considered "the knowledge base of teaching". Unfortunately, the theory became prescriptive, and practitioners were taught to improve practice by applying them. This was a problematic way to proceed because it deskilled teachers. Teachers were not perceived of as capable and responsible educational

leaders but as followers. They were denied their rightful role as knowledgeable, efficient, and creative authorities of teaching, and practice has suffered.

As an alternative, Carr and Kemmis maintain that teachers themselves ought to be doing the educational theory-building. But their view of educational theory is not merely practically or professionally-oriented, it is also politically-oriented. Carr and Kemmis maintain that curriculum that is grounded in the commitments of the professionals who are members of a critical community will serve the children and society well. In a critical community, educators work toward a vision of schooling in which all children have access to the material resources and cultural capital that will enable them to live the good life. The good life is realized by those who are free to make choices, and the freedom to make choice is a hard-won achievement, one which relies on having received an education. The role of the educator in a critical community is to create conditions under which the critical community can be galvanized into action in support of democratic values. That educator must be able to model and organize the improvement process so that all participants can become actively involved. He or she must be democratic, self reflective, committed to the clients best interests, and committed to the development of education.

In concluding their book, Carr and Kemmis argue that educational research, professionalism and reform are closely linked. Educators who do research ought to be as concerned with the origins, values and traditions that influence education as a profession, an institution, and a social practice as they are about teaching and learning itself. Educators who are involved in reform ought to be concerned with power relationships, particularly the value orientations that guide participation in the reform process and the generation of theories for education. As stakeholders, parents, the State, and professional educators have a natural interest in the children's education and welfare. They all ought to be able to draw on their historical understanding, values, traditions, and lived experiences as a source of knowledge for generating and/or evaluating school reform plans. Carr and Kemmis believe that it makes sense to arrive at consensus on a few shared principles, values, and outcomes, and then to use those to guide the reform educational institutional structures.

"The participatory democratic approach of action research gives form and substance to the idea of a self-reflective critical community, committed to the development of education". (p. 5). Conducting collaborative action research in schools is one way to develop a critical community. However, the critical community must be also made up of teachers, students, and parents, and any other person who is concerned about the development of education. (p. 1-5). Therefore, Carr and Kemmis suggest that participatory action research will help teachers to investigate existing traditions, values, and expectations within the community and to guide educational reform within the schools.

Becoming Critically Reflective Professionals: Orientation toward Praxis

The action research movement is an international movement. It is a movement that is concerned about the power of practical theorizing to reform schools and the power of education to transform society. As Carr and Kemmis suggest, university researchers and teacher educators need to proceed in their work with a sense of the history of the movement and an appreciation for the evolving conceptions of democracy. Robin McTaggart's Short Modern History of Action Research, discusses the origins, traditions, and future possibilities for action researchers to mobilize citizens to improve schools and society. His short history includes discussion of the action research movement in the United States, England, and Australia. In Participatory Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences, McTaggart (1997) includes the ideas of participatory action researchers from Austria, England, Columbia, New Delhi, Australia, Venezuela, Spain, The United States of America, New Caledonia, Thailand, and Nicaragua. These participatory action researchers work in formal and non formal settings. McTaggart's contribution in this recent book is a discussion of the themes, issues, and fundamental purposes of participatory action research, which are to eliminate alimentation and to promote "ownership of social inquiry and its role in social amelioration" (p. 21). McTaggart discusses the following: the (1) the nature of participation, (2) substantive fields of inquiry, political and cultural aspects; (3) discourses, practices, and power relationships; (4) key emergent themes: (a) common themes: participation, communication, communitarian politics, reflective, collective critique, (b) themes involving difference: institutions, the State, and ontology and epistemology and (c) submerged themes: culture, and method.

McTaggart's books are an invaluable resource for those who are serious about the potential for this democratic social movement to influence communitarian politics, institutional culture, and the lives of participants. Wherever there are democratic governments, there are researchers who are becoming reflectively conscious of past traditions and about socialization and education of citizens. Government by, for, and with the people depends on an educated and informed citizenry. Education is as much a political socialization as a academic socialization. Wherever there are action researchers there are those who are developing methodology and those who are striving to articulate theories based on collective inquiry into practice and into the situations in their lives and who are striving to improve the quality of their work/lives and of society.

Susan Noffke's (1997) article, "Action Research," published recently in the Review of Educational Research, highlights how those working in the critical emancipatory stance develop professional knowledge, personal and interpersonal understanding, and political

where-with-all to participate in the democratic social change process. Noffke maintains that the action research focuses on advocacy, collaboration, social amelioration, and empowerment. She maintains that action research contributes to the professionalization of education by nurturing in educators at all levels a sense of ownership, authority, and conscious awareness of the political nature of their work. Noffke notes that there is a democratic impulse to action research, one which is inclusive, communitarian, and idealistic. Whereas, McTaggart (1997) refers to action research as a "broad church" (p. 1), Noffke (1997) identifies the many families for action researchers within the international community. Noffke understands the potentials of action research as (1) professional--, contributing to staff development, pushing the boundaries of curriculum development; (2) personal/interpersonal--enhancing self-understanding and fulfillment in one's work and one's work with others; (3) political--involving citizens in technical, rational, argumentative, and deliberative thinking and in establishing and maintaining the moral order and the form of just and principled education that is democratic (p. 333-335).

Action research is not just an umbrella term for diverse methods that practitioners use for doing inquiry into practice. It is a movement that has consistently contributed to the professionalization of teaching and democratization of education. In this international movement, educational researchers are creating conditions that facilitate personal understanding, professional empowerment, and the generation of theory and practice for democratic education.

Becoming Critically Reflective Practitioners: Action Research in the Classroom

University researchers and teachers need a variety of resources in order to work productively towards constructing a theory and practice of democratic education. The books that are reviewed in this section provide information about action research technologies that are empowering teachers to develop professional, personal, and political knowledge.

How to Conduct Collaborative Action Research

This technical nuts and bolts approach, based on scientific method, recommended by Jon Sagor (1992) in How to Conduct Collaborative Action Research, appeals to teachers who are just beginning to develop a research plan which is aimed at helping them to systematically understand, monitor and evaluate their action in the practice setting. Sagor draws on research on effective schools to identify the norms of school cultures that promote learning and achievement: collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, support, reaching out to the knowledge bases, appreciation and recognition, caring, celebration, humor, involvement in decision-making, protection of

what's important, traditions, and honest, open communication (p. 6). Sagor's approach provides the teacher educator with strategies for helping teachers to formulate problems, collect and analyzed data, and report results. He describes how analytic interviewing and cognitive mapping strategies can help teachers identify research questions. Then he suggests sources of data that already exist in their possession (student work, files, everyday documents, grade books) and those that the teachers must create (diaries, videotapes, written surveys). He illustrates how to create a data matrix. The data matrix includes the sources of data and the categories under study. He illustrates how to prepare a report based on data collection and interpretation. The report has four components: introduction, description of the research process, analysis of data, and an action plan. The action plan is put into place using force field analysis, a strategy developed by Kurt Lewin. In this manual, the university researcher facilitates the training, brings in relevant research, lends status and legitimacy to the project, and is a mentor and a model. Sagor's book serves technical interests. The role of the university researcher here is to provide technical assistance to the practitioner. For those who are just beginning to do action research a little method provides a little scaffolding and a little security.

Action Research in the Self-Renewing School

Emily Calhoun' (1994), How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School, is another practical guide to institutional action research. The book, based on her own work as a trainer in sixty-one schools in Georgia, USA, is intended to help faculties to engage in school-based action research. Calhoun conceptualizes the action research itself as a cycle and the interpretive process that involves funneling together the study of student behavior and the study of literature and research, then making decisions. She conceptualizes action research as a management strategy for bringing about change, citing Lewin as a source of inspiration for her work. She proposes that action research promotes professional development, citing Carl Glickman, who is a leading advocate for models of developmental, reflective models clinical supervision. She believes that the first step in planning an action research project is conducting a school-wide needs assessment because that brings the faculty together around a problem.

The book is a rich, practical resource, which contains actual documents that she has created in her own work as a facilitator of institutional action research. Charts provide information on data sources, prompts for analyzing policy documents, strategies for organizing and managing data. A target plan of action illustrates the planning that one school did for an academic calendar year.

In Calhoun's estimation, the university researcher should be an "outsider", who is a "seasoned professional" who is knowledgeable about the school and about school reform.

She also conceptualizes that person as an "assistant" who teaches and coaches the team in methods of data collection, while providing technical support. The process is simple:

(1) seek agreement with others in the school on what to study;

(2) collect and share information on students knowledge, skills and attitudes;

(3) search own practical experience and examine education research for strategies and programs that will improve student performance;

(4) work together to improve student performance and achievement;

(5) collect data on research question (p. 35).

Calhoun focuses teachers on issues of teaching and learning, insisting that teachers "*must focus on what the students are experiencing or have experienced*", and the list of problems she provides are strictly academic (improve global literacy) or psychosocial (self esteem) (p. 42-44).

Calhoun believes that the quest for school renewal through action research...

- is a route to immediate student outcomes, can develop the school as a learning community;
- can build organization capacity to solve problems;
- is a staff development program through study of literature and on-site data and the determination of optimum actions for implementation; and
- can be personal an professional development. (p. 100)

Calhoun does not problematize or criticize the project of schooling. Her book provides practical strategies for conducting research on teaching and learning in classrooms and schools.

Collaborative Action Research: A Developmental Approach,

Oja and Smulyan (1989), Collaborative Action Research: A Developmental Approach, believe that action research provides practitioners with opportunities to guide their own personal and professional development. Their book is intended for both university researchers and practitioners, and provides an historical overview of action research in action research and examples of school based action research from the Action Research on Change in Schools (ARCS) Project in England. Most helpful to beginning action researchers are the various conceptualizations of the research cycle. Oja and Smulyan represented the research process as being both linear and cyclical. They don't simplify the action research process to a series of steps or cycles, rather they suggest that it is holistic, complex, and recursive. Oja and Smulyan's book focuses not on student learning, but on teacher learning and the complexities of schooling.

The roles of the university researcher according to Oja and Smulyan are to:

1. activate the process;
2. provide relevant research;
3. provide a sounding board against which practitioners can try out ideas,
4. help coordinate the work of the teachers;
5. negotiate collaborative relationships;
6. help develop a common language; and
7. arrange for dissemination of reports.

Oja and Smulyan use a cognitive developmental framework to reflect on cases of five participants, focusing on differences in the teachers' perceptions of power, decision-making and change, group organization and process; authority and leadership; the school principal and goals and outcome of the research. They highlight how difficult it is to conduct research in the practice setting. The teachers' perceptions, understandings and interpretations are influenced by their own development; the contextual variables in the school influence the research process; and the action research process itself is complex and nonlinear. Oja and Smulyan focus the participants on the collaborative research processes, models of support and evaluation, and group dynamics. They note that three factors influent the action research process and outcomes: school climate, administrative support, and opportunities for collaboration. Collaborative action research can help the teacher construct professional, personal, and political knowledge, which will help them to improve practice within the existing context of the school culture and climate.

Living Educational Theories

Jack Whitehead, from Bath, England has been helping educational action researchers to create their own "living educational theories". In his work with teachers and with doctoral students, Whitehead maintains that theories are sets of interconnected propositions and may be valid regardless of their origins: practical or scientific. Theories explain and are then used to justify action and to interpret events. Living theories are based on experience and practice, and they are based on the history, language, and cultural experience of the person who is articulating them. In his work, Whitehead aspires to improve practice by validating the concerns of practitioners and by encouraging them to inquire into the basis of their reasoning. He rejects a disciplines approach to educational theory of practice because he believes that in order to understand the intersubjective dynamics of meaning making and social interaction in the practice setting, educators have to validate their concerns, document their perceptions, analyze their anecdotes, and extrapolate the social significance of their interpretations and assumptions within, but not necessarily beyond their own situational context. Whitehead maintains that living theories are full of values, understandings and contradictions and that educators develop "dialogical and

dialectical values" as they interrogate their own experiential theories. He cites the work of his compatriots, work which espouse the value of--"compassionate understanding" (Ladkin, 1998); aesthetic and moral values" (Laidlaw, 1996); "spiritual values" (Cunningham,1996); "dialogical and dialectical values" (Eames, 1996); "methodological values" (Lomax, 1997) and (Hughes, 1996); "political and economic values" (Whitehead, 1993), "leadership values" (Evans , 1995); and "relational values" (Holley, 1997).

Whitehead looks to the work of Bakhtin for the justification of this type of theorizing. In my own reading of Bakhtin (Holquist, 1990), which was cited in Whitehead's paper, I noted that Bakhtin focused on the text and context that surrounds the "utterance, " as well as the "text" the "novel" that encodes a description of the experience. Whitehead draws on Bakhtin in a different way though. He notes that living theories are constructed even before we have the capacity to speak of them, emerge with our birth, and develop throughout our social lives, but most early accounts come from the anecdotes we hear from others and most of our accounts are embedded in images, remembrances, and narratives about particular events. "Stories", Bakhtin maintains, "are the means by which values are made coherent in particular situations". Stories form the basis of Whitehead's notion of "living theories". "Living theories," when encoded in text, can be used to support the "grounded analysis" of the accounts of teacher-researchers and university researchers as well. In other words, our stories can be analyzed. When we reflect on the meanings of the values that emerge from our anecdotes and our living theories, we develop a deeper understanding of the context in which they are shaped. We also see our "fuzzy generalizations" and our own "living contradictions," and the "critical events" that forever fire our spiritual and moral consciousness.

> He maintains the focus of educational research should be
>
> to improve the relationship between educational theory and professional development. we take educational theory to be a kind of theory which can arise from, and, in turn, generate explanation s for the educational development of individuals in a form which is open to public testing. (Whitehead and Foster, 1982)

Whitehead's theory is applied to practice in Jean McNiff's (1992), Action Research: Principles and Practice. When the action research cycle is used to help the practitioner focus on self improvement, these questions guide the inquiry:

> What are my concerns?
>
> Why am I concerned?
>
> 3. What do I think I can do about it?
>
> 4. What kind of evidence could I collect to help me make some judgment about what is happening?

5. How would I collect such 'evidence'?

6. How could I check that my judgment about what has happened is reasonably fair and accurate'? (pp. 38-39)

In Whitehead's mind, teaching is learning. Action research involves the researcher as the main focus of the research and it is personal. The action researcher begins with the self, with personal questions, then imagines solutions. Next he or she takes action in the direction of the solution, and then evaluates outcomes. He or she does not arrive at propositions, rather he or she writes about particular events of practice in the first person, engages in self analysis, examines her values, habits, loyalties, self image and attitudes, as she discusses the effectiveness of her interventions. All the while, the researcher is interrogates his or her own values and the living contradictions between values and practices. Educational action research puts the researcher in the role of creative agent, and autobiographical awareness can be furthered through interaction with others. Drawing on Schon's work, Whitehead believes that "living theories" come out of dialogues, in which new theories of a unique case emerge. Whitehead discusses how closely theories are related to people's self constructions and their self as a social construction. Each researcher is a product and respondent to history, culture and society. The role of the university researcher in Whitehead's conception of action research is that of an empathic listener.

Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research

Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research by Herbert Altrichter (Professor of Business Education and Personal Development at the University of Innsbruck, Austria), Peter Posch (Professor of Curriculum Studies at Klagenfurt, Austria), and Bridget Somekh (Lecturer at the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia and Coordinator of the Classroom Action Research Network) (1993), is a practical and useful guide for university researchers. It contains practical strategies for helping beginning action researchers.

In Altrichter's conceptualization, the self is not the focus. The focus of the research is the way that the situation speaks back to the researcher. The strategies that Altrichter, Posch and Somekh suggest in their book promote reflectivity without placing excessive demands on time and energy of the practitioner.

Four strategies that help the action researcher find a research question include:

(1) Maintaining a research diary. A research diary is a useful strategy for finding 'starting points for research.' In the diary the action researcher records entries (date, time, participants, setting, event, unusual things), then making theoretical notes (explanations relevant to the research question) and recording methodological notes (reflections and

methods and procedures for gathering more data), and fleshing out the text. Eventually, the researcher maps some of the episodes and makes comparisons, noting patterns, developments and so on (pp. 10-32).

(2) Finding a starting point. After identifying an interest, a dilemma, or a problematic situation, the beginning action researcher uses thinking strategies like brainstorming, categorizing, analyzing, and evaluating various starting points, until he or she can select one that is worth clarifying. At this point, the action researcher begins to collaborate with others in the practice setting to get more information and diverse interpretations concerning the problem. By so doing, he or she activates tacit knowledge and can begin elaborating a practical theory. The practical theory considers positive and negative influences, sources of origination of the problem, causes, the system of relationships in which participants are caught up, and holistic and analytic perspectives. Finding the connections and relationships between these factors enable the beginning action researcher to clarify the problem better (pp. 33-40).

(3) Conversations. Analytic discourse is a procedure that is designed to increase one's understanding of the situation. Essentially, the beginning action researcher puts the problem or a case before a group of colleagues and they pose questions that help the researcher further clarify the problem (p. 57).

(4) Diagrams and Charts. Using a graphical representation to record one's development is practical. Time lines, conceptual maps of theories, drawings, flow charts, are graphic representations that reveal categories and relationships. The categories that emerge are grounded in the cases and the situations. They clarify the focus for data collection (pp. 58-64).

Data Collection takes many forms (pp. 69-115). Four useful strategies include:

(1) The Ladder of Inference. This useful strategy developed by Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh is called the ladder of inference. The beginning action researcher organizes his or her inferences along the edges of a ladder--at the lowest rungs are inferences made after observation, at the next rung are inferences made that are related to cultural values, and at the highest rung are inferences that get at the meaning or the significance of the statement or event (p. 81-83).

(2) Establishing criteria for judging the quality of the action research (pp. 74-79). The criteria for judging the quality of action research that are specified include these: Does the action research lead to improvement of the experience of the client? Does it help all participants develop a better knowledge and practical understanding of the situation? Does it help teachers develop professional knowledge? Does it improve education as a discipline? Ethical considerations include relevance, participation, and respect for clients' need for

confidentiality, negotiation, and control. An example of an Ethical Code is provided on page 79.

(3) The Dossier. A dossier is a collection of materials that are collected according to criteria and organized into categories. This data base includes information from teachers and students. The participants reflect on the dossier and identify clues to the problem together (pp. 81-82).

(4) Observations. After deciding on a problem to investigate, the beginning action research makes an observational plan that specifies what and why he or she is observing. Then she or he strategically observes and records information about the problem on a card. After the observation, he or she composes an anecdote. Over time he or she has a collection of problematic issues which have been observed and interpreted, and a basis for making an observational profile. An observational profile is simply a chart the categorizes information in three categories: teacher, student, and milieu and examines participation across time (p. 83-98).

(5) Photography, Tape recordings and Video recordings. Photographs provide one form of data. Tape recordings are another form of data. They can be indexed and transcribed, and communicative patterns, like turn-taking, interruptions, etc., can be analyzed. Video recordings are useful, but they take a lot of time to manage and analyze (p. 83-98).

(6) Interviews. Interviews reveal much about the relationships between participants. The interview should be prepared in advance, carried out with the help of the interviewee, and provide expansion and clarification of the issue or problem (pp. 101-110).

Making sense of data is the work of analysis (pp. 119-134). If the beginning action researcher has been systematic in the research process, then the analytic process described in the book will follow logically. Reading, selecting, and presenting data in a way that leads to a summary is a critical stage of analysis. In the analysis phase, the action researcher reflects on the data alone and with others to formulate an interpretation, which includes various perspectives. Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh again propose some insightful strategies:

(1) Shaping metaphors. A metaphor captures the gist of an experience, but represents it in a different manner. When people are begin to construct meaning, their meaning is shaped by their lens, when they share meanings and organize them into networks of meanings, the meanings become more complex and richer. It is playfulness in the data analysis process that enables people to identify metaphors that can be used to radically reduce the data to manageable units of meaning (pp. 119-131).

(2) Communicative Validation. Dialogue is one analytical method that can be used to assess if an interpretation is representative of the consensus of the group. By taping them transcribing the tape, the beginning action researcher can begin to identify patterns of communicative participation, power, decision-making that inform the interpretation. If we are to generate critical communities, then this stage of analysis is particularly valuable (pp. 131-152).

The development of action strategies is, in this process, a co-construction, and the process of implementing a plan of action involves many of the same strategies as were evident in the initial phases of the research (pp. 153-176).

(1) Brainstorming. The action researcher then the group brainstorms action strategies and evaluates each alternative (desirability, negative side-effects, practicality, feasibility (p. 162).

(2) Nominal Group Technique (NGT). This is a procedure for making decisions in groups. It involves explanation of the question or issue to be considered, individual listing of ideas, collection of the lists, clarification of ideas, selection of the five statements that seem most relevant to the question, individual ranking of statements, collection of rankings, discussion and interpretation of results. This strategy takes time, is demanding of the facilitator, and requires a carefully-worded focus question (p. 163-168).

(3) Time plan. The sequence in which the selected action strategy is implemented, monitoring of results and reflective comments are recorded on a chart. Objectives, research and action strategies, and improvements are recorded on another chart (p. 170).

Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh conclude the chapter on developing action strategies in this manner:

> Action research is an 'art of the possible' which does not aim for a predefined ideal state, but helps us to see the potential which is implicit in the situation, and to put into action practice actin strategies that correspond more closely than previously to our present values. To this end, its cyclical character is most important. The 'test' of action strategies leads to everyday practical action, to new starting points for reflection and, thus, in some cases to new research cycles.... This new starting point will often include novel questions, which have only emerged because 'improvements' resulting from prior research have raised the level of aspiration-- making it possible to see further potential for innovation, thus, leading to a further spiral for professional development.

The final stage of the action research is making the teacher's knowledge public. Research results can be disseminated in a number of formats. Guidelines for the following

formats are provided in Teachers Investigate Their Work. The presentation makes the study public and opens it to celebration of and evaluation by a critical community.

(1) Oral presentations.

(2) Poster sessions.

(3) Reports.

(4) Case studies

Clearly this book was written from the perspective of university researchers and teacher researchers who have had considerable experience teaching others how to conduct action research. The strategies will seem familiar to those who have worked with students or colleagues to develop a research question, a system for organizing and analyzing data, and writing up the results of the action research. The book is 213 pages in length and many of my action research projects have been similarly lengthy. The teachers note that keeping the diary, a description of the process, the transcripts of audiotapes, videotape and interviews, the surveys, the data charts, the multiple interpretations, the action plans, and reflections on action plans, a great deal of time and effort.

The authors note in their conclusion to the book that in teacher's action research there is "no separation between stages of knowledge construction (reflection) and testing (action). Reflection takes place in action and it does not occur in stages." Action researchers continuously examine the expected and unexpected consequences of their actions as they are occurring and afterwards. And the truth is, action researchers must live with their mistakes, feeling them as the situation 'talks back' to them. Altrichter uses the term reflexivity to describe the way that the results of reflection are continuously transformed into practice as the practice continuously throws up reasons for reflection and development of practical theories. Reflexivity is the characteristic feature of action research that enables the action researcher to rigorously test his or her theories (1993, p. 208).

Becoming Critically Reflective Professionals: Action Research in Schools

Teachers and administrators are increasingly working together on school-based action research studies. In this section of the paper, I review approaches that are being taken in England, the United States and Canada. I selected three studies because they illustrate three very different perspectives on school based action research. David Hustler, Tony Cassidy, and Todd Cuff (1986), from England, edited Action Research in Classrooms and Schools, J. Bradley Cousins and Lona M. Earl (1995) from Canada, edited Participatory Evaluation in Education, Gary L. Anderson, Kathryn Herr, and Ann Sigrid Nihlin (1994), wrote Studying Your Own School. Each of the books provides a unique lens for studying schools.

Hustler, Cassidy, and Cuff are eager to involve teachers in their own professionalization by encouraging them to become researchers. They draw on the conceptualization of teacher as researcher as articulated by Elliot and Adelman, who designed the Ford Teaching Project, one of the early action research projects in England, and who were past coordinators of CARN, the network that Bridget Somekh coordinates today. The teachers in Hustler, Cassidy, and Cuff's project are interested in instrumental issues, and they resist being referred to as teacher researchers. They view themselves as practitioners and they use data and methods that are already familiar and in many cases are a part of their practice to inform their theorizing.

Cousins and Earl clearly view participatory evaluation as serious business. Their book is about organizational learning. While placing teachers work in the foreground of reform, they see research as rigorous work, which includes involving trained university researchers in all phases of process, particularly in the interpretation and evaluation phases. The idea of merely generating educational theory from practice is unacceptable to Cousins and Earl, who believe that a critical theory of education will be informed by other professionals as well. A critical theory includes mistakes. They include in their collection studies where members of the organization did not learn or only engaged in incremental learning. They acknowledged the problems associated with trying to conduct school-wide action research projects. First, few teachers are trained to do research. Second, the few teachers who actually engage in classroom research are often viewed as "elite lepers," within their own schools. Third, the evaluator who tries to empower everyone to do research and to have voice, often becomes the "evaluator who is up to her elbows being all things to all people-- (who) will not generalize". (p. 167). For Cousins and Earl, participatory evaluation is the business of experts. They describe their model and findings, but do not describe methods or analysis, though they do reference the names of the experts who provided them with their methodology.

Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin, provide those working with practitioners in schools a bridge between Hustler, Cassidy, and Cuff's approach, which is practitioner-driven and Cousin and Earl's approach, which is driven by experts. They do a sophisticated job describing research techniques that are frequently used in qualitative research in terms that practitioners can comprehend and use in their research. Their book empowers practitioners, university researchers, and evaluators to work together using a common language and some shared criteria.

The graphic organizers on the following pages compares (1) definitions of action research; (2) theoretical stance; (3) the research process; (4) relevant topics; (5) methods of inquiry; and (6) products; (7) issues; (8) theories generated.

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	Hustler, Cassidy, Cuff (1986) Action Research in Classrooms and Schools	Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin (1994) Studying Your Own School	Cousins & Earl (1995) Participatory Evaluation in Education
definition	What follows is as close as we would wish to come to a definition of action research where teachers are the practitioners. They subject themselves and their practice to critical scrutiny; they attempt to relate ideas to empirical observations; they attempt to make the process explicit to themselves and others through the written word. Their prime concern is to improve their own practice in a particular situation from the standpoint of their own concern or worry. For them action research seems to be a practical way forward given their concern in that situation. They use or design aspects of their action as teacher to find out more about effective teaching, and, in our view, they do so rigorously. It would thereby establish not only the legitimacy of Stenhouse's (1975) notion of 'the teacher as research' for that range of audiences, but also draw on the major resource available within the teaching profession for improving teaching, i.e. the teachers themselves. (3)	We use the term practitioner research for pragmatic and philosophical reasons. Although the term action research is still widely used in education, it is associated in the minds of many with a particular academic social science tradition initiated by Lewin. The term teacher research has been appropriated by a movement of teacher researchers in North America that recently has broadened to embrace all school practitioners. Practitioner research, a term increasingly used by school practitioners, places practitioners at the center of the enterprise. In basic terms, practitioner research is "insider" research done by practitioners (those working in educational settings) using their own site (classroom, institution, school district, community) as the focus of their study. It is a reflective process, but is different from isolated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken, and generally requires that some form of evidence be presented to support assertions. What constitutes "evidence" or in more traditional terms "data is still being debated. Most practitioner research is oriented to some action or cycle of actions that practitioners wish to take to address a particular situation. For this reason, the term action research has traditionally been used for this type of research.	With its roots in contemporary knowledge utilization and change theory, participatory evaluation promises to add some much needed structure to the process of collaborative decision-making in schools. Collaborative decision-making and the development of professional cultures which support such collaboration and processes critical to the success of most school change initiative. (1) Participatory evaluation is conceptually distinguishable from various forms of action research and other types of collaborative inquiry on two important, although not independent, dimensions: interests (goals) and form (process). First traditional action researcher orientations advocate the simultaneous improvement of local practice and generation of valid social theory. More contemporary 'practitioner-centered instances of action research (e.g. emancipatory, critical, educative) are explicitly normative in form and function and have as a goal empowerment of individuals or groups or the rectification of societal inequities. Such interests are beyond the scope of participatory evaluation. The approach that we advocate is not ideologically bound, nor is it devoted to the generation of social theory. Rather, participatory evaluation has, as its central interest, seeking to enhance the use of evaluation data for practical problems solving within the contemporary organizational context. A second dimension, form, takes shape in participatory evaluation by having the researcher working in partnership with members of the community of practice. (9)

	Hustler, Cassidy, Cuff (1986) Action Research in Classrooms and Schools	Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin (1994) Studying Your Own School	Cousins & Earl (1995) Participatory Evaluation in Education
interest/ tradition	technical/practical interpretive (14)	critical emancipatory systematic subjectivity	professionalization
process	collaboration with • participants/colleagues • outside LEA administrator • university researchers levels of enquiry • a few teachers at a school doing individual enquiry • a group of 20 teachers from various schools • a group of teachers within school doing collaborative inquiry published case studies	collaboration • educational practitioners • students • parents • other members of the community • outsiders (university faculty and consultants) collective, self-reflective inquiry and critically examined action based on practitioners understanding of the situation involves experimentation and observation leads to revision of practice or new efforts to improve the situation	The process is described in a chapter entitled "Exercises," pages 181-183. 1. Knowledge exercises. These exercises help the group arrive at a definition of participatory evaluation, to discuss benefits, possible drawbacks, factors that are responsible for successful implementation, and factors that inhibit success. 2. Application exercises. The first set of questions help the group describe their project, determine the audience for whom it is being conducted, study the impact, and determine the usefulness of the study. A second set of questions guide the group in making decisions about the innovations, curriculum, and programs that members of the school and the district want to investigate and can investigate. The third set of questions deal with the function and applicability of the research. The fourth set of questions deal with formulating the proposal in a way that will make the study relevant and the findings generalizable within the professional community.

	Hustler, Cassidy, Cuff (1986) Action Research in Classrooms and Schools	Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin (1994) Studying Your Own School	Cousins & Earl (1995) Participatory Evaluation in Education
methods	observation reports of experience diary tests artifacts surveys achievement tests tape recordings transcription-based analysis multiple interpretations criteria for validity: not discussed	Data • interviews • observations • archives and documents • journals and diaries • conversation • ethnographic interview • structured interview • surveys/questionnaires • oral histories • participant observation • field-work journal • action logs, checklists and rating scales • mapping strategies • visual recordings On-going analysis and reflection • coding systems (settings, situations, process, activity, events, methods, strategies • discourse analysis • dilemma analysis • constraints analysis • content analysis • document analysis • sociometric analysis • thematic analysis • episode analysis • Spradley's ethnographic analysis, domain, taxonomic, componential • analytic induction • constant comparison • standardized observational protocols criteria for validity: • democratic validity (inclusion of multiple voices, • outcome validity (resolution of the problem), • process validity (dependability and competency), • catalytic validity (the extend to which the research process reorients and energizes participants toward transformation of the situation/ resolution) • dialog validity (goodness, based on peer review) • transferability (31-32)	Data • questionnaires • written correspondence • group discussion • interview • structured interviews with key informants • Needs assessment Analysis • Likert scale • Miles and Huberman (1984) coding strategies • methodological log • Goetz and Lecompte 1984 • Patton (1980) • The Ethnograph (Qualis Research Association, 1988

	Hustler, Cassidy, Cuff (1986) Action Research in Classrooms and Schools	Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin (1994) Studying Your Own School	Cousins & Earl (1995) Participatory Evaluation in Education
topics	What is worth knowing? • relevance to governmental agenda for policy reform (10) • creating a more open classroom • responses to non -literal art • making sense of literacy for deaf children • veteran teachers & change • tutors in math classes • teacher concerns in comprehensive schools • externally-initiated concerns • curriculum innovation • single sex science classes • parents, teachers, and alternative curriculum	What is worth knowing? • epistemological and political skills • empowerment of others • multivocal • commitment to social justice • dialogue, voice, and silence • empowerment • racism • redefining professionalism • redefining knowledge • redefining schooling	What is worth knowing? • how to conduct a district wide evaluation of school improvement • role of partners • the dynamics of internal evaluation assessing program needs participation in evaluation of funded school improvement effects and conditions involving practitioners many modes of participatory evaluation insights into researcher-school community partnerships participatory evaluation in an international context
product	professionalization of teaching improvement of learning changes in school structure	political knowledge • understand institutional micropolitical forces • redefine roles • knowledge generation, ways of knowing, and power • problematize the functions of educational practices and of schooling lifelong learning spirit	restructuring schools into learning communities by • raising educational standards • involving partners • professionalizing teaching • producing adaptive knowledge • applying research enhancing social discourse about relevant issues
role of university researcher	none other than consultant or staff development, as requested	clarifying how to do practitioner research	coordinator or facilitator of the project, shares control and involvement with practitioners
role of policy makers	evaluation		policy makers inform the change process
Issues	teachers are reluctant to view their work as research need for a definition where the teachers are the practitioners (208)	finding methods of data collection and analysis that don't give them one more thing to do	What is required of schools and school systems? What will be the role of researchers
theory	practical theory	practical theory	theories in action, mental models or system theories

All of these books take a sociocultural approach to mediated action. Hustler, Cassidy, and Huff focus on individual learners learning within an organizational context. Anderson, Nihlin, and focus on a collaborative group of learners learning within and organizational context. Cousins and Earl focus on organizational learning. In all three of the books the role of the university researcher is to be a good listener who is responsive to the

members of the community and who possesses the technical competence to help them develop the capacity to articulate and interrogate professional and practical theories, and to critically evaluate educational policies, programs and situations. What is required of the researcher and practitioners is intensive social interaction, real engagement in the research project, and follow-up involvement after the evaluation is completed.

Discussion

On the continuum of school based research we have action research that is a form of constructivist learning, action research in the guise of critical theory, action research that is a form of professional development that is directed towards implementing desired institutional reforms, and action research that is a form of organizational learning. In each of the books that is reviewed above, the university "partner" is conceptualized as a "technical assistant," a "facilitator," an "intruder," or "a change agent." The university researcher is nearly always viewed as an "outsider."

As a university researcher who works with K-12 teachers, I wish to stand on record as being, not merely an "outsider" or a "technical assistant" in the educational project, but a full fledged, joint member of the educational community. Action research, particularly the participatory varieties that interest me, are far to time and labor intensive and yield far too few earth shattering insights for me to do this work merely to advance my own career. I do this kind of research because I believe that "art of education" and the "art of government" in a democracy is important to the common people, silent majorities, practical-minded practitioners, bureaucrats, charismatic leaders, and economists, and my obligation as a professional is to be informed about the people's concerns.

As I noted in the introduction of the paper, action researchers work in the democratic tradition, and as conceptions of democracy have evolved so have the theories and methods used by action researchers. Increasingly, we are moving toward deliberative forms of democracy, which require a particular type of education of citizens. Deliberative forms of democracy require an informed citizenry. Amy Gutman (1987) believes that those who jointly share the responsibility for children--the family, the State, and professional educators-- will need to establish a "theory of democratic education" that prepares citizens to participate in a deliberative democracy.

My discussion of the role of the university researchers in participatory action research is informed by those who are writing essays about deliberative democracy. The discussion will continue to highlight the importance of educating teachers who can engage in practical reasoning and in critical analysis of educational and social situations. However, it will also clarify the conditions which university researcher and practitioners should create as they become knowledge-producing members of the democratic community.

Democratic deliberation occurs in inclusive environments. According to Gutman (1987), two principles govern participation in deliberation--nonrepression and nondiscrimination. However, the ground rules for putting in place a deliberative democracy are very sophisticated. According to those who contributed to Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics (Bohman and Regh, 1997), deliberative democracy, or the idea that legitimate lawmaking issues from the public deliberation of citizens", is an ideal of political governance based on practical reasoning of citizens (p. ix). Deliberative democracy calls for more than participation and empowerment; rather, it calls for knowledge of the procedures that take into account both fairness (the rule of elites), and correctness (every citizen's will) (Estlund, 1997, p. 179-180).

The role of government, and likewise, education, in a deliberative democracy is to establish principles and policies that provide "conditions for expressing contradictory views, debates, dissension, and tumult, which are at the very heart of a healthy democracy". (Gauss, 1997, p. 337)

What does this require of university researchers and practitioners? In a deliberative democracy, every citizen who participates in the deliberation has to know the rules.

What are the rules? First of all, the task of participation in a deliberative democracy is to communicate reasons for action that will influence others to endorse collective outcomes. This calls for decision-making based on the assumption of interdependence, procedural equality (either unrestricted or representative access to vote, anonymity of voters, neutral treatment of votes), and substantive criteria for engaging in argumentation and persuasion.

How do people behave in a deliberative democracy? First of all, all citizens have a fair opportunity to hold a public office and influence the political decision-making. That means that race, class, and gender are not used as a basis for participation, however, citizens must possess the following relevant capacities. They must be able possess the capacity to:

1. articulate and formulate preferences
2. use cultural resources that they possess to will the process, and that includes their language and way of being;
3. diminish uncertainty and make effective decisions, which requires cognitive ability and skills. (Bohman, 1997, p. 300-301)

Moreover, they must respect the social contract. What is the social contract in a country that is multicultural? According to James Bohman (1996), the ethical substance that is required in a deliberative democracy is to be able to "fuse the horizons" of disparate creeds (quoted in Richardson, 1997, p. 376.

What does that mean? That means embracing individual intentions and arriving at a shared intention of the common good.

How does one achieve shared intentions?

Achieving this kind of progress on a rational basis requires three things:

1. Individual citizens must be able to modify their conceptions of the public good;
2. These modifications must be responsive to reasons offered by others; and
3. Citizens must openly commit themselves to acting on this modified view of the public good (Richardson, 1997, p. 376).

According to Richardson, the first two conditions that are required of citizens who participate in a deliberative democracy can be determined by private citizens, but the third condition must be determined publicly and through political action.

How does that influence the work university researchers do with practitioners? Those who are educating citizens for participation in a deliberative democracy have to provide them with conditions in which they can learn how to articulate their own ideas, modify them in relation to the articulated ideas of others, then subject their collective ideals to deliberation in public forums, and this is the route to learning how to form shared intentions and mutual obligations.

What are some of the problems that university researchers and practitioners face as they confront issues of diversity related to race, gender and class while doing research?

One of the threats to deliberative democracy and to any reasonable society is the tendency to think categorically. Much of the rhetoric about identity politics and the "politics of difference," is according to Todd Gitlin (1995), "a very bad turn, a detour into quicksand," and he implies that we had better pull ourselves out and get back on the main road of general citizenship and the common good.

While some of her colleagues fear that identity politics are tribalizing citizens into competing camps, Young believes that it is necessary to discuss differences. She maintains that if discussions about racial, gender, and class differences occurred frequently, it would become clear that people do not position themselves in relation to those categories. They position themselves in relation to others. She sees social groups as collections of persons who are similarly situated in the social system of power and resource allocation. However, she sees individuals as having the sense of agency and autonomy to define themselves as members of multiple social systems; therefore, their identities are not fixed and immutable. Rather than identifying with their position in a serial or predictable way, in complex societies like ours, people tend to respond in a number of different ways to their situation.

Rather than fear difference, Young suggests that the democratic process should be one, not only where people promote their interests knowing that others are doing the same

thing, (though she acknowledges it is often the case), but it is also a method for determining the best and most just solution to social conflicts and problems. (p. 400) Since Young considers difference a necessary resource for making more just and wise decisions in a democracy, she advises that Americans to consider the following three functions of dialogue during their discussions:

1. We need to maintain plurality of perspectives because they motivate us to consider every person's appeals for justice while we are in the process of deliberating on the common good;
2. We need to listen to the view of those who are situated differently from ourselves and understand how we look to them. That will protect all of us from thinking that our experiences, preferences, and opinions are uncontroversial.
3. We need to listen across differences and mediate our understanding with the understanding of others.

There are implications here for action researchers and for educators. The "strong objectivity" that is required of those who will participate in a deliberative democracy, one in which every perspective informs and reforms the social project, has to be nurtured in schools. In other words, university researchers and practitioners are charged with creating conditions that prepare citizens to deal with difference in mutually beneficial ways.

Joshua Cohen (1997) discusses those conditions in his essay "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy".

> A deliberative democracy is a framework of social and institutional conditions that facilitates free discussion among equal citizens--by providing favorable conditions for participation, association, and expression-- and ties the authorization to exercise public power and the exercise itself to such discussion--by establishing a framework ensuring responsiveness and accountability of political power to it through regular competitive elections, conditions of publicity, legislative oversight, and so on. (p. 413)

Cohen notes that there will always be tensions in a pluralistic country, but that we have the resources of dealing with the tensions and still arriving at a sense of collective good. One of the ways he proposes to do this is to bind people together in functionally specific associations--and having them construct a new basis of social solidarity through a process of defining and addressing common concerns.

This takes us back to Amy Gutman's proposal to bring parents, the State, and professional educators together to define and address common concerns related to schooling and citizenship. The form of democratic education that Gutman believes will prepare citizens for contemporary democracy is deliberative. University researchers and

teachers who are interested in promoting contemporary principles of democracy through participatory action research, particularly those who believe that education is a political as well as a social project, may want to consider the ideas put forth in Gutman's book, Democratic Education, in a recent issue of Educational Leadership on Democratic Education, and in Bohman and Rehg's collection of essays on reason and politics in Deliberative Democracy.

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Mary Rearick and Allan Feldman (1998) have developed a framework for understanding aciton research that is designed to get action researchers deliberating on the action research space. The framework transcends differences among existing models of action research by creating a schema that has as its dimensions: theoretical orientation (Grundy, 1987), purposes (Noffke, 1997) and types of reflection (Rearick). We tested our framework on four recent books written by teacher educators who work with practitioners. The tool may prove useful for helping action researchers see that the various discourses in education, whether evaluative, scientific, practical, or utopian, all contribute to the democratization, professionalization, and improvement of education.

Conclusion

The action research movement is an international movement that strives to involve all citizens in creating conditions that support democratic forms of government. University researchers, who work with school personnel to help them develop the historical consciousness, political savvy, practical wisdom, and personal integrity that is needed to participate in deliberative forms of democracy, will find that this review of research particularly useful. The books reviewed in the paper provide the theoretical grounding, critical lenses, practical reasoning strategies, and technical skills that will enable univeristy researchers and practitioners to conduct collective inquiry and reflection into educational and social situations. The final discussion centers on the articulation of democratic theory of education for action researchers. This democratic theory is one in which those who are vested in the education of citizens can reflect on critical issues, discover shared intentions, and create conditions in schools which prepare all citizens to live the good life and to participate in deliberative forms of democracy.

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